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Letters to The Times

Nixon's Views Queried

He Is Criticized for Evaluation of
Electorate's Standards

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

From recent reports in The Times and other newspapers, Richard Nixon's new book, "Six Crises," appears to throw significant light on the author's appraisal of the political mores of our country.

He claims that he is the architect of the Eisenhower policy to train Cuban rebels in this country and to plan the ill-fated "invasion" of that island.

During the 1960 campaign Mr. Kennedy called for a stronger stand against the Castro regime, after, as Nixon claims, briefing by C.I.A. officials. On the last point he apparently is mistaken, but in any event, Nixon says he "got mad." So, he is reported to write: "There was only one thing I could do. I must attack the Kennedy proposal to provide such aid (whatever that was to be) as wrong and irresponsible because it would violate our treaty commitments." (His explanation is that he had to protect a "secret operation.")

It is my own opinion that Nixon was quite correct when he argued that assistance by this country to groups planning a military invasion of Cuba constituted a violation of the United Nations Charter and the Organization of American States Treaty which prohibits any "direct or indirect" aggression against a nation with which we are at peace. Quite consistently, I think the Kennedy Administration is as much at fault as its predecessor in participating in this treaty violation.

My point here, however, is that a former Vice President and candidate for the Presidency brazenly boasts that he attacked his opponent on an issue of great international concern for sanctioning the very policy for which he himself had been the "chief advocate." I would be most pessimistic of the chances for the survival of democracy in today's world were I to think that the moral standards of the American electorate were as low as Mr. Nixon apparently believes them to be.

FOWLER HARPER,
Professor of Law, Yale University,
New Haven, Conn., March 23, 1962.

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